

BIRDS, INCLUDING A HYBRID, NEW TO UGANDA

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Four species of birds and one hybrid, previously unrecorded in Uganda, were found whilst I was in the country from 9 February 1983 to 8 January 1984. Three of the species and the hybrid are discussed here: the fourth species is being discussed elsewhere. Numerals and upper case letters in brackets are the $\frac{1}{2} \times \frac{1}{2}$ degree square references (Turner 1981).

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*

- a. Lutembe (0:08N, 32:39E), 25 April 1983, one adult in breeding plumage (46D).
 b. Entebbe (0:04N, 32:28E), 2 June 1983, one in 1st summer plumage (46C).

a) The first bird flew past close inshore at Lutembe, Lake Victoria during a very large movement (10 000 birds) of White-winged Black Terns *Chlidonias leucopterus*. Compared with the latter, it was judged to be half as large again, with a longer dark bill, long forked tail and white underparts showing a darker shade (off-white or pale grey) on breast. The smoky-grey border to the under-surface of the primaries was seen well and is a good character for distinguishing the species from Arctic Tern *S. paradisaea* which has a clearly delineated blacker frame to the tip. Except that it was dark, bill colour was not seen; the amount of red showing is variable in spring and it develops gradually. The breast was paler than in spring adults on the coast of Somalia; these birds are probably *S.h. tibetana*, and the Lutembe bird possibly nominate *hirundo*.

b) The second bird at Entebbe flew about for several minutes over the water close off a headland in Lake Victoria. It was in typical 1st summer plumage, with the black crown not fully developed, but clearly showing the underwing pattern of the above bird and a well-forked tail.

The species is common off the East African coast, but has only twice previously been recorded inland in Kenya (Britton 1980), in September and October.

Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*

- a. Entebbe (0:04N, 32:28E), 9 October 1983, one immature (46C).
 b. " " " 10 October 1983, one immature
 c. " " " 15 October 1983, three immatures
 d. " " " 16 October-5 November 1983, 1-2 on 6 days
 e. " " " 6 November 1983, five immatures
 f. Kibimba (0:32N, 33:53E) 8 November 1983, one immature (47B).

This irruption into southern Uganda is without precedent in East Africa. The exact number of birds at Entebbe is not known, but at least seven were involved. The first (a) was quite distinct, being fearless and having pale sandy brown upperparts with clear

dark mottling or spotting over the chestnut area of the wing, and it was not seen again.

The following day another bird (b) was found about 1 km away, whilst searching for the previous day's bird with Dr M. Carswell. This was a very 'wild' and much greyer bird, with some derangement of the head feathers suggestive of an injury; it too was not seen again. After my absence for four days, there were three birds (c) on 15 October, similar in plumage to (b), and one or two probably from this same group seen often until 5 November. Then on 6 November with Dr M. Carswell and A.B. Sheldon there were five birds, all generally alike, and apparently including two new arrivals (e). There were no observations at Entebbe from 7 to 22 November, but no Turtle Doves were seen on 23 November, nor thereafter. However, an immature was found on 8 November at Kibimba, some 166 km east of Entebbe.

Except for the second bird at Entebbe, which was very unapproachable, all the others were fearless and often permitted approach to within 10 m as they fed on the ground. Mostly they fed in cultivated patches, especially among cassava plants which were thick with weeds, but often flew into large trees to rest and preen. They became particularly associated with one area around a group of inhabited huts where they often joined a group of free-ranging poultry. The Kibimba bird, however, fed on open tracks in an irrigated rice scheme and was far away from any cover.

Generally they did not consort with other species of birds. The Red-eyed Dove *S. semitorquata* is the only other dove at Entebbe, and although the Turtle Doves often fed close to them, only the second one (b) tenaciously held company with one. The Kibimba bird similarly was associated closely with a Ring-necked Dove *S. capicola*.

These Ugandan localities are far to the south of most earlier records, but it is of interest that at the same time one was found even further south on 22 (23) October at Amboseli (2:30S, 37:00E) Kenya by Dr D.J. Pearson (*in litt.*, 26.10.83). Taken together these observations suggest that there may have been an unusual widespread small-scale irruption of the species into eastern Africa in 1983. It is unquestionably rare in East Africa from where there are only two previous known occurrences at Barsaloi (1:20N, 36:52E), N. Kenya, 16-19 October 1976 (Britton 1980); Samburu Lodge (0:40N, 37:30E), Central Kenya, 3 January 1981 (Haas *et al.* 1981). There are also two records from South West Africa (Namibia) (Winterbottom 1974) and one from Aldabra in the Indian Ocean (Frith 1974). To the north in Ethiopia I found them each autumn in small numbers, but sometimes 40-50 together, between 25 September and 9 November (once 11 September), and in spring between 8 March and 27 April, in 1970-1976. Between these periods there were only two observations, each in December (17-20th), suggesting that there is a passage to and from areas further to the south. Further east in Somalia there are three records in the north in spring and another from Gezira (1:57N, 45:11E) in the southeast, of a bird on the

coast on 24 November 1978 (Ash in prep.).

There was individual variation in the colour of the upperparts of the birds in Uganda, but most were greyish, especially over the head and extending on to the breast. All wing feather tips and edges were margined with buff to reddish buff, including all primaries, producing a distinct mottled or scaly appearance. In flight and on the ground the combined effect of these pale edges produced a band of reddish brown on the wing. All birds had the belly white. Their tails were the same colour as the upperparts, darkening terminally and broadly tipped with pure white (although the two central tail feathers on some were tipped pale grey). Bill dark, legs red, eye mustard to red-brown. There were no neck markings until 15 October when one bird was beginning to develop the dark bands. The first (a), however, lacked this greyness and was pale sandy brown (isabelline) above, with a paler forehead, and paler buffish breast; the brown patch on the wing was richer in colour (chestnut) and had more distinct darker centres to the feathers, producing a mottled or spotted effect.

The first bird (a) was possibly referable to one of the North African races *hoggara* or *isabellina* and the others, because of their pale grey heads and general pale colour, were most probably *arenicola* or perhaps from an intergraded population with *turtur*. It is probably not possible to identify immature birds to subspecies with certainty. Further observations will probably show that Turtle Doves are more frequent, if not regular, visitors to East Africa.

Dusky Nightjar *Caprimulgus fraenatus*

Nr. Moroto (2:32N, 34:39E), 18 June 1983, 1 at 52 km S.W. (24C)
Nr. Moroto (" "), 20 June 1983, 5 at 24-45 km N.W. (24A).

All of these were found dead on dirt roads. In the early morning of 20 June 1983, 12 dead nightjars were collected on the road between 24 and 45 km by road north-west of Moroto. They included one Pennant-winged Nightjar *Macrodipteryx vexillarius*, one Plain Nightjar *Caprimulgus inornatus*, three Slender-tailed Nightjars *C. clarus* and five Dusky Nightjars *C. fraenatus*. Three of the last species had undamaged wings of length (male) 161; female 156, 164 mm. Also, although there are records close to the border in Kenya, it has not previously been found in Uganda (Britton 1980). Dr D.J. Pearson kindly checked a wing and some tail feathers against specimens of *C. fraenatus* at the National Museum in Nairobi and found agreement. I have several other similar specimens, which have also been confirmed as *fraenatus* at the British Museum (Natural History), Tring, where one is deposited (Registration No. 1985.1.5).

Eurasian Swallow *Hirundo rustica* x House Martin *Delichon urbica* hybrid.

Entebbe (0:04N, 32:38E), 1 October 1983, one.

In a flock of over 100 Eurasian Swallows hawking for food in the

lee of two large trees on 1 October 1983 at Entebbe, there was one bird noticeably different in its manner of flight. Through binoculars it was taken at first to be a House Martin because of its white rump - a seldom reported species in the area (Carswell, in press) - but its head was like that of a swallow's, and its tail was intermediate between the two species; in fact it possessed the mixed field characteristics of both species.

It immediately recalled similar birds I had seen in Indonesia, and whose identification I was unable to determine. (These birds were on Bali at two localities on the same day 27 August 1981: two at Anturan and one at Banyu Wedang. They were noted as having dark throats and forked tails as in *rustica*, but with white rumps as in *Delichon*). Thus I was specially interested in obtaining further information on this bird, particularly as there is no known species of *Hirundo* with a white rump. Vansteenwegen (1980) recorded a similar hybrid male paired with a female Swallow in Belgium, and mentions 30 other instances. Since then there have been several other records including Prendergast & Boys (1983) in U.K., and Grech (1984) in Malta and Denmark.

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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

NOTES ON SOME BIRDS OF OL ARI NYIRO, LAIKIPIA PLATEAU

During the period 28 April to 11 May 1985, while conducting research on honeyguides Indicatoridae on Ol Ari Nyiro (Laikipia) Ranch in Central Kenya we observed, and in some cases recorded voices of, birds that are noteworthy in terms of avian distributions or particular behaviour patterns we have not seen reported before. Most of the species mentioned below were observed, and some ringed in the upper Mukutan Gorge, the Mukutan being a stream draining westwards from the Laikipia Plateau through a narrow gorge, then opening out towards Lake Baringo. The study site in the Mukutan is at 0:36N, 36:22E at an elevation of 1740 m. The habitat consists of narrow riparian woodland mainly of fever trees *Acacia xanthophloea* and rocky surrounding hills bearing mixed leleshwa *Tarchonanthus camphoratus*, acacias, and *Combretum* spp. During April and May the ranch was experiencing its heaviest 'long' rains in a decade.

Four-banded Sandgrouse *Pterocles quadricinctus*

A pair stood closely in front of our vehicle, and then at its side for 10 min, within 7 m of us on 4 May. This was at 18:30 in leleshwa-acacia bushland on a rocky slope. This is considerably east of prior reports, the nearest of which (Britton 1980) is at "the Kerio Valley".

Cuckoos

During early May seven species were singing, five of which were reasonably common. In order of abundance based on vocal activity (which of course may underestimate numbers of those species just beginning to sing) these were the Red-chested *Cuculus solitarius*, Black *C. clamorus*, Didric *Chrysococcyx caprius*, Black and White *Clamator jacobinus*, Klaas' *Chrysococcyx klaas*, Levaiant's *Clamator leivaianti*, and Emerald *Chrysococcyx cupreus*. All species ranged through diverse habitats we encountered, except that the only singing Emerald Cuckoo was in the riverine woods.